

2

Ireland, No. 9.]

# IRISH PUBLIC OPINION

ON

## HOME RULE.

---

### WHAT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF DUBLIN SAYS:—

“It is our strong conviction that if anything be now done to disturb the Legislative Union, the trade of the country will be most disastrously affected. . . . If the idea of creating a separate Legislature for Ireland be carried into effect, the Government will, in our opinion, be brought face to face with an economic crisis and a condition of destitution in Ireland of a magnitude and extent which we cannot but contemplate with feelings of alarm and dismay.”—*Address of Welcome presented to the Earl of Aberdeen, February 22nd, 1886.*

### WHAT THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OF BELFAST SAYS:—

“This meeting deplores the agitation which now exists for loosening the ties which render Ireland in all respects an integral part of the United Kingdom, and is deeply sensible that the commercial prosperity which has blessed the peaceable parts of this country will receive a sudden shock and lasting injury from every legislation which would have any tendency to imperil the connection between this country and Great Britain, whether by the creation of a separate Parliament or National Council, or otherwise.”—*Resolution adopted at a Meeting held in the Chamber of Commerce, Belfast, January 15th, 1886.*

### WHAT THE UNIVERSITY OF DUBLIN SAYS:—

“The peace and prosperity of all classes are, in our judgment, indissolubly connected with the legislative union between England and Ireland.”—*Address of Welcome presented to the Earl of Aberdeen, March 12th, 1886.*

### WHAT THE CHURCHES SAY:—

*(Extracts from Official Addresses to the Lord Lieutenant.)*

#### THE CHURCH OF IRELAND (600,000 Members).

“We contemplate with dismay the social disorder, intimidation, and violence which prevail in many parts of Ireland, due to an agitation, the promoters of which would, it is evident, have paramount influence in a separate Irish Parliament. We, therefore, protest—in common with large numbers of our fellow-

countrymen who do not belong to our Church—against the establishment of such a Parliament in this land. We are convinced that so revolutionary a change would only aggravate the peril to civil and religious liberty and the insecurity of property and life which now exist.”

**THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN IRELAND**  
(500,000 Members).

“We would deprecate in the strongest manner, as disastrous to the best interests of the country, a separate Parliament for Ireland, or an elective National Council, or any legislation tending to imperil the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, or to interfere with the unity and supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Legislation in any of these directions would, in our judgment, lead to the ascendancy of one class and creed in matters pertaining to religious education and civil administration. We do not believe that any guarantees, moral or material, could be devised which would safeguard the rights and privileges of minorities scattered throughout Ireland against the encroachment of a majority vested with legislative functions. Whilst acknowledging that large sections of the Irish people have in the past suffered many and grievous wrongs, we believe there are no grievances removable by legislation which cannot be removed by the Imperial Parliament, while the establishment of a separate Parliament in Ireland would most seriously aggravate many existing evils, and would produce other evils greater than any that at present exist.”

**THE METHODIST CHURCH IN IRELAND (51,000 Members).**

“We would deplore any steps which might be taken, either by the Government or the Legislature, which would weaken the bonds which unite this country with Great Britain, and which would tend to the legislative independence of Ireland—a measure which, in our judgment, would be fraught with evil to the best interests of the United Kingdom.”

**THE NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIANS (60,000 Members).**

“We should be untrue to the convictions, not hastily formed, which we entertain respecting the Union of the Three Kingdoms, if we did not venture, at this unprecedented crisis, firmly to assure your Excellency that we look to the maintenance of the existing Constitution, with its Imperial Parliament representing the United Kingdom, as the indispensable safeguard of the liberties of the whole people of this island.”